

THE NEWS LETTER

OF THE COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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THE CEA AND BETTER TEACHERS

In the following months, the NEWS LETTER expects to publish statements on English study and English teaching which will be identified as tentative expressions of the Association's policy. They will be presented for discussion. "The CEA and Better Teachers" is the first.

The chief problem of those concerned with the teaching of college English is how to improve the quality of the teachers. And to improve the quality of the teachers means that we must recruit superior young men and women as teachers and must see that they are given the proper training.

That we face a difficult problem in recruiting the best young people for English teaching is clear. The great prestige of science, enhanced by the scientific and technological developments of recent years, gives scientific research and teaching a fascination for capable young men that the humanities cannot match. Moreover, the rewards, financial in particular, come more quickly and more abundantly to the young scientist, whether teacher or research worker—and often he is both—than to the young scholar and teacher who chooses English for his career. Just now our universities and industries are bidding high for brilliant young scientists. The young literary scholars are in no such demand. The consequence is that English is not drawing its share of the ablest, most vigorous, and most promising young men. At a time of expansion, when teachers are being added everywhere, the result may be disastrous. Unless we do draw the ablest, our position in education will deteriorate.

There is a second problem closely related to the first, and that is the training of the teachers who are recruited. On the whole the graduate school trains for research rather than for teaching, and for research, in general, that has little relation to teaching. Of course research workers are needed in the humanities as well as in science. Nevertheless there is dissatisfaction with this condition. Young men with artistic interests, or even with intellectual interests, often do not feel at home in the graduate school and may be lost to teaching or later may find themselves prevented from advancing

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WHOSE JOB IS IT, ANYHOW?

The responsibility for exhibiting some degree of literacy in every college student lies on English departments with the depth of tradition and perhaps the weight of the inevitable. Since the end is good, we must forever be seeking the means that are best. Of one thing I am convinced; to my understanding it is an entirely convincing thing: A decent command of our language, whether in speech, reading, or writing, or in their adjunct facilities such as spelling or grammar—the word "communications" turns out to be very useful—this plausible literacy is a discipline rather than a "subject." Facts and rules are for once of much less importance than right and comfortable doing. What sort of tennis player ever corrected his "style" by referring to page 4, Section 3, Rule 14 of his Handbook for Champions?

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Biography in the English Curriculum?

We were in the process of debating the place of biography in the English curriculum at Montana when I came across the article on the subject by Mr. Samuel Weingarten in the August, 1945, issue of The News Letter. In our discussions I had been taking a stand against the very trends that Mr. Weingarten describes as well-worked out and in operation at the Chicago City Junior College, and although I grant that many of the arguments for the inclusion of a course in biography are sound and telling, I wish to present a few arguments on the opposite side.

No one can deny that biography has in recent years moved closer to literature and that its writing has become more a creative art, more an interpretive art, more a fine art. Surely it is difficult sometimes to draw a line between a novel whose subject matter closely parallels the events in the life history of a man and a biography that takes small liberties with actuality in order better to present the essential truth of the life portrayed. Surely also some modern biographies are more clear-cut works of creative art than are some of the traditional pieces with which we have been dealing in our literature courses for a long time.

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Of the 215 ballots returned in the election of officers, all but two approved the slate proposed by the nominating committee. Three ballots were unsigned, and one had no expression of opinion about officers. The present officers are therefore declared re-elected for the year 1946, and the terms of the present directors are herewith extended for one year.

THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH

When I was a boy my Uncle Frank always took me to see the circus when it came to town. We never actually went to the big-top, though; from a street corner we viewed the eleven o'clock parade. "Here you can see it all," Frank would say as he made a hole in the crowd for me to crawl through. "If you go to the circus grounds you're bound to miss something."

I've often recalled this sage advice as the circuses have come and gone by my class-room window these past fifteen years. There's nothing like seeing the parade go by; you miss nothing. Each year I look forward to seeing the new feature of the Greatest Show on Earth, The English Teachers' Three-Ring Circus. Each year brings its new specialty, new tunes, and new ballyhoo. Each year some of my colleagues get so excited that they rush out and jump on the band-wagon. Sometimes so many are already aboard that late-comers have to leap on foot, dancing and cavorting with the clowns and the freaks.

One of the earliest street-shows that passed my office had a gigantic palimpsest banner declaring "Know Old Norse and You Know It All." The members of the band, all in academic dress, strummed harp-like instruments and chanted alliterative verse in a Cambridgeshire dialect. A friend of mine climbed on the band-wagon and played a trumpet call from Roncevalles, but even so, the show that afternoon was far from a sell-out.

Another early circus had a noisy band playing "Experience in English." Banners announced "All Plays Are Acted," "Learn to Write by Reading Newspapers," "Every

See SHOW, Page 2

AS OTHERS SEE US

What G's Say About English

In its own way the English grammar review class of today is as different from the review class of four years ago as the university graduate student is different from the high school sophomore. The reason is simple: the personnel of the class has changed. The veteran who looks out an English class and registers for it is not the youngster he was the day he went away to war. His mind has matured; his sense of values has mounted. He is older, and he is in a hurry. "If I do anything wrong, let me know right away," one said to me. "I have no time to waste. I'm twenty-five, and I've got to be getting along." He was a college freshman with six years of soldier's life behind him.

From my own experience in the Navy I might have suspected that I could not come back to my English class and resume where I had left off in the spring of 1944. Aboard ship or on shore station I had been face to face with American youngsters who felt their weakness in English and who sought me out when they learned that I had taught it. The complaints were the usual ones: the sailor couldn't get the right word; he knew his written request was poorly expressed; he couldn't punctuate; he couldn't spell; and principally he couldn't write letters—even to his home folks, though he knew how they longed to hear. When he got out of the Navy, he'd go back to school, and he'd learn all that. There were other men who wanted me to recommend a list of books for reading or to help them learn French. Though I did what I could, there was little time in a busy Navy for much personal guidance. I was refreshed, though, and continually amazed by the extensive curiosity and interest displayed by so many of the men. As I say, I might have expected a change; but as a matter of fact the memory of dim classroom days had become so rose-tinted that I believed I could step back into the schoolroom, pick up my text, and continue with the same old exercise.

The hallucination was not long-lived. The records of my first classes showed over seventy per cent veterans, ranging in ages from twenty-one to thirty, ex-privates to ex-captains, boys ripe

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THE NEWS LETTER

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EDITORIAL

With the currently weakened tradition of liberal education, it would be well to state the case for literary study in terms that an intelligent citizen may paste in his hat. He asks honestly why a study of the sciences and history is not more important than the humanistic discipline. He wonders why the humanities should claim that they best give the desired understanding of man as a whole, or of man's place in society and the cosmos. Literature seems to him an elegant amusement, rich and satisfying, no doubt, if you have time for it. Of course, learning to speak and write effectively is another matter; training in composition is desirable for all students.

In college and out, English teachers are widely held to be prissy, or precious, or remote, or trivial, or escapist, or the inventors of scholarly parlor games. Moreover while English departments condemn the scientific discipline as mere training in a technique, do they not themselves often adopt the patter and pattern of science in training their majors and their graduate students? And does not the atmosphere of the graduate school frequently thicken the air of general undergraduate courses? Any effective move to strengthen the position of literary study must take account of these considerations.

Mr. Somerset Maugham, in *The Summing Up*, remarks, "Art, if it is to be reckoned one of the great values of life, must teach man humility, tolerance, wisdom, and magnanimity. The value of art is not beauty, but right action. . . .

To attempt to give an object of art life by dwelling on its historical, cultural, or archaeological associations is senseless." And Mr. Bridgman, in the January NEWS LETTER, said, "(In a large business like A. T. & T.) where major decisions of broad policy are involved, those who have studied the problem intensively must be able to state their premises and conclusions in language which is not only precise but also persuasive, with some sweep and movement which compels attention. . . . Such language, moreover, apparently is not the product of classes in Business English or technical writing but gains its power through a sense of meaning, a grip on style, and an imaginative feeling drawn from great literature."

Are not our purposes in general those of which Mr. Maugham and Mr. Bridgman speak? And if we do not achieve them, can we expect our society to continue its support of us?

Cacoethes Scribendi,
Acute

(The following is a genuine letter of application received by a Wall Street broker.—R. M. Gay)
Mr.
Esquire,
c/o The New York
Stock Exchange,
11 Wall Street,
New York, New York.
My dear Mr.:

Although of the opinion that a correspondence of this category addressed to you is quite anomalous, it is done with the hope that you may at least peruse it. The Stock Exchange long has held my deepest interest. Candidly, my personage knows very little about this intricate ramification of the business world. Yet I seem to have some immanent, inexpressible fascination anent this complexity. So profound is this regard that it is my arch ambition to succeed in it as a career.

My education is very good and is being augmented daily by hours of comprehensive study on coeval topics and contemporary literature. Thus, this writer's ample amount of intelligence is encompassed with definite cosmopolitan ideas. Furthermore, I am possessive of high ideals, although more concerned with the materialistic rather than the idealistic.

Unfortunately, references of previous employers can not be tendered since I never have been employed. However, Mr. of can inform you apropos of perseverance and integrity. The capacity of employment I seek is not of especial moment. This must best be left to your rational discretion for wherever you may adjudge me best qualified. What

PERSONALS

M. Edmund Speare, the original editor of Pocket Books, received in December a silver kangaroo "Gertrude" (the "Oscar" reserved for PB authors who sell a million) for his two anthologies, *The Pocket Book of Verse* and *The Pocket Book of Short Stories*. Dr. Speare writes, "The fun of it is that there was a 25 cent Pocket Book which begins with Chaucer, goes on through the 16th and 17th century English poets, has Milton, Dryden, Shakespeare's sonnets, excerpts from the Bible, and little that is contemporary. And what I added from these was pretty conventional: i.e., Lanier, Henley, Wilde, Francis Thompson, Santayana, etc. And yet that book, on news-stands, railroad stations, and stores non-educational, has reached a sale of well over two million copies. That's the Pocket Book of Verse. Isn't that a comment on the reading habits of our adult public?"

Representing the English Department, Strang Lawson had a hand in drafting a report adopted by the Colgate faculty, *Atomic Energy: The Alternatives Before Us*. The alternatives are 1) preparing for total war which will use atomic weapons or 2) assuming that there MUST be no future world war. "These are the alternatives. They are mutually exclusive. There is no practicable middle course." The report adopts the latter alternative and proposes steps for the Universities in furthering international exchange and educating the community on the nature of the problems that face the world as a result of the discovery of atomic power.

APPOINTMENT BUREAU

The Executive Secretary has been able to suggest candidates to all administrative officers who have written him, and to tell each registrant with the bureau of an opening. Members are urged to mention the Bureau to deans and heads of departments, and to spread word of it among their colleagues.

I endeavor to imply, without any form of inference, is that my enthusiasm will not overwhelm by efficiency.

May I conclude with the trustful reliance of receiving a propitious replication instituted by your more politic discernment?

I am,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed)

SHOW

Continued from Page 1

Student a Poet." This gaudy display was followed by another band-wagon blaring forth "Every Teacher is an English Teacher." Unfortunately this demonstration failed to attract any of the mathematicians, chemists, and geologists who were peering out their windows, and the show that followed was not a success. Soon after came the "Salvation Through Semantics" Show, advertising Alfred Korzybski, the strong-man who could extricate himself from any sentence by applying mathematics to language. His Chicago Band was noisy enough to attract many followers, but the circus-sale of his cure-all, Science and Sanity, was distressingly small.

The Integration Boys had a disorderly show in which the trombone player caused pandemonium by changing places with the snake-charmer. The latter couldn't manage the gut-bucket at all, while, as a matter of record, the trombonist got some fatal bites from the rattlers. Right now another wagon of wind-jammers is causing considerable excitement outside. It keeps playing "The Great Book Fugue." The music was discovered in an old Greek sarcophagus and is extremely difficult to play. The wagon is filled, I note, with crowds of elderly gentlemen who have not been employed recently. They have a banner reading "The Classicists Told You So Years Ago."

Each show that went by taught me something. The philologists had good discipline; the experience people aroused a lot of interest; the integrators demonstrated laudable cooperation; and the advocates of Great Books showed commendable concentration. But, just the same, I'm glad I didn't jump on any of the band-wagons. Uncle Frank was right: Here you can see it all; if you go to the circus grounds you're bound to miss something.

George S. McCue,
Colorado College.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC MEETING

The Middle Atlantic Section of CEA plans to hold its first meeting since the war at Johns Hopkins University, on Saturday, April 6.

LITERARY CRITICISM

The editor invites members to contribute articles of literary criticism of not more than 1500 words. The 1000 word limit must still apply to all other contributions.

Mention the Association favorably to your friends. Contribute to its publication.

KEYSTONE?

Dean Hasley's proposition that philosophy is better than literature for the central study of a liberal education rests upon two assumptions, one of dubious validity, the other demonstrably false.

First, it assumes that the mind exercises a "sovereign" power over the emotions in obedience to "principles of judgment" drawn from philosophy. This reading of the function of the mind is debatable. It may be more accurate to describe the mind as a sort of public relations officer for the other departments—emotive, appetitive, etc.—that make up the human animal. At any rate, I am not sure that the mind is sovereign or even isolable in any clearcut way.

Whatever psychology we adopt, however, the second assumption—that "philosophy" can offer a definite and single set of principles—is demonstrably false. There are as many sets of principles as there are, perhaps not philosophers, but systems of philosophy. The ghost of Parmenides looks over Dean Hasley's shoulder, the ghost of Heraclitus over mine. Anyone who will take the trouble to open a history of philosophy or religion will note general disagreement on all philosophical and religious matters. There is no philosophy, there are only philosophies. I am aware that those made uncomfortable by multiplicity have designed elaborate and subtle systems to show it to be illusion. But any such system will have to count as one philosophy among others until it becomes really catholic. Doubtless, convinced adherents of every system believe that it should become catholic, but to date no philosophy has shown signs of occupying that position.

The superiority of literature or philosophy as a subject for most students does not lie in the fact that one is single and the other various and confused. Both are various and confused. That, in itself, is not a bad thing. The earlier one learns that the world is full of people who do not feel and think as he does and are as likely as he to be right, certainly not wrong because different from him, the better citizen of a democracy he is likely to become. This lesson he can learn from either philosophy or literature, preferably from both. Literature is, I think, better than philosophy for pedagogical reasons. But that is another matter entirely.

F. D. Cooley,
University of Maryland.

Eng. Lit. 2B?
Or Not 2B?

One of the young ladies down the street, who sometimes watches our child, confessed a deep feeling of shame the other night.

She had settled down on the couch, preparing to study Eng. Lit., 2B, when she looked up at me and frowned. "You know," she said, "everybody tells me Shakespeare is marvelous, but I think he's as dull as beans. Am I stupid or something?"

No, young lady, you're not stupid or something. It is your English teachers who are stupid. They have turned the wonder of Shakespeare into a grim pursuit of the Metaphor, the Hyperbole, the Iambic Pentameter, and the Trochaic Tetrameter. Not even Shakespeare can survive this beating.

It was not until I left high school that Shakespeare began to come alive for me. We had read "Macbeth" and "Julius Caesar" in class, but it was all a blur. I remember vaguely getting up and reciting off the lines beginning, "You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things," but I might as well have been reciting the World Series lineup (which I knew better, by the way).

My English teacher was no worse than most, I suppose, but she seemed to have a grudge against every quality that makes Shakespeare great—his vitality, his magnificent vulgarity, his irony and his deep sense of the dramatic. She put him through the wringer of cold, virginal analysis, and in the process, Lady Macbeth came out as passionless and as lifeless as the average English teacher.

I don't think this is an unfair charge, because thousands of school children feel the same way about Shakespeare, and they are not all stupid. This is a genuine tragedy, because many of them go through life with a prejudice against the classics that was bred in Eng. Lit., 2B, by some frosty spinster who no more understands Shakespeare than a triangle can understand Euclid.

Of course, the answer is to get better people into the teaching racket, but how are you going to do this when an arc-welder or a perfume salesman can make more dough than any kind of teacher except a football coach? Until the folks who pay taxes realize how important good teaching is, maybe it would be better to banish Shakespeare from the schools altogether, and let the kids read him themselves when they get older.

It's even worse with history, but

I'VE BEEN READING

Members are invited to contribute to this column comments on any book, old or new, general or professional, which has added a cubit to their intellectual stature, and which they recommend to other college English teachers.

J. Gordon Baker.

New Light on the Revolution

Some other teachers of American literature may be interested in three books which I hope have made me "a wiser and a better teacher." The first, which is out of print, is still obtainable if one searches for it. It illuminates the civilization of this country at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Writing from immediate first hand experience of the Revolutionary war and from personal knowledge of men and documents and out of a highly cultivated intelligence, the author shows herself to be a scrupulous scholar and lively with her pen. The book, being "interspersed with biographical, political and moral observations," having "rectitude for its basis, and a beneficent regard for the civil and religious rights of mankind for its motive" reveals the philosophical bent of the age and the qualities of character and behavior of which the leaders of the age approved. It is "History of the Real Progress and Termination of the American Revolution," 3 vol., by Mrs. Mercy Warren, 1895, Boston.

Mrs. Warren was sister of James Otis and wife of James Warren. The book deserves to be reprinted and published at moderate cost.

The other two books are about the Declaration of Independence: Carl Becker's "The Declaration of Independence," a study in the history of political ideas, New York, 1932, and a book put out by the Library of Congress in 1943: "The Declaration of Independence," the evolution of the text. The chief article in it, "The Drafting of the Declaration of Independence," is by Julian P. Boyd, Historian, The Thomas Jefferson Bicentennial Commission. Although Professor Boyd acknowledges his indebtedness to Becker, his book makes a specific contribution to the subject. Both help the student of literature to understand better than the general run of literary criticism (so it seems to me) the roots of the ideas in the Declaration, the then current understandings and acceptance of them, and show fascinatingly the evolution of the

that's another column, and it's getting late.

Sidney J. Harris,
Chicago Daily News,
December 26, 1945.

wordings of the ideas that we are so familiar with. The Becker book is a mine of pure gold, presenting both a model of scholarship and the struggle for survival against their enemies that the ideas have had and that threatened them from the first. All this sheds light on the scattered shreds of the ideas as they become embodied in our nineteenth-century authors up to the Civil War. Both books are also profitable study for students in composition.

Marian H. Studley,
Russell Sage College,
Troy, New York.

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BIOGRAPHY

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Nevertheless, biography as a kind of writing is not near the center of the area that we usually define as literature. There is, granted, an overlapping, but here lies the main issue. Is it not time for us to stop compromising our position by spending our time on the periphery of our adopted approach to the world in which we live, instead of keeping faith with our method, our province of human knowledge, and our particular access to reality? Our method is not the scientific method, and the aspects of reality that we are trying to get at are not the aspects that the scientist, whether physicist, biochemist, psychologist, or sociologist, is likely to see so long as he is following his own method. I think most of us are agreed, essentially, even the most ardent literary naturalists, that we look at the world from the other end—from the end of individually perceived unities of experience. Somehow—we are not so well-agreed or so clear on this point—out of our experience with the unified experiences that poets and dramatists and novelists have captured for us we acquire the insights or the kind of knowledge about the world that brings us closer to the ideal of man, with wider sympathies, broader understandings; we become more adult in our thinking and more civilized. This, I think we are agreed, is the ground upon which we stand as "professors" of the humanities. If we have no faith in our province, or if the words seem empty—mere verbalisms—then we should shut up shop and find work for our willing hands somewhere else.

I do not imagine that Mr. Weingarten would disagree, at large, with this statement of our position. And so we are back at the main point. We should not be primarily concerned with the methods of creating literature, which we share with the advertiser and the historian as well as with the biographer; we should primarily be concerned with literature as a particular approach to valuable human experience. It is not the experience alone that is important; the approach is equally important. It is the approach certainly that marks the difference between the sociological novel and the sociological treatise. This is to insist, of course, that our province, literature, does have limits. The writer of literature is limited in not being limited to any certain set of nervous responses to his world. To the contrary, he is supposed to react as a "whole man": digestion, affections, and emotions, as well as reason and perception. Furthermore, he shapes the world that he sees to some inner unity that he

JOB

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The need for this discipline is constant; the chances to attain it encumber our path. And until intellectual operations are conducted through some medium entirely distinct from language, this discipline of literacy is quite as useful in the study of economics as of literature; and hardly less important in mathematics or in chemistry in spite of their use of supplementary symbols to represent, in brief, concepts which ultimately must be expressed in language.

By what perversity or duplicity, then, have English teachers been persuaded to accept the blame for all inadequacies in language skills? Have they been too eager to accept responsibility? Or is it the result of persuasive tactics of their

perceives in himself in his relations with the outside world. What results is not truth in the scientist's sense, for that unity cannot be tested by the scientific method, nor does its value lie intrinsically in the accuracy of its facts. As we move from the norm of literature toward the periphery, we find pieces that do not show the "whole man" at work, except approximately. An artist may be unbalanced in one way or another, or the particular kind of art he is trying to produce may require him to depart in some direction from the norm of the "whole man", but when this departure is too great or too serious, his work ceases to be literature. Biography as a class is certainly a departure from the norm of literature, in that the biographer, like the orator, merely borrows some of the imaginative trappings of literature to handle more effectively his alien substance. It may be true that no biography is worth much if it does not reveal the biographer as well as the subject, but the life of the man being told is the ruling force.

My argument is, simply, that as teachers of literature we should get back closer to the center of our province, not to narrow ourselves down to an effete and sterile region but to insist that the literary mind has something of value to offer the world over and above the shaping power of imagination, and to keep the student from becoming confused about what ground it is upon which we stand. If it is true that the scientific-minded student does not readily elect courses in poetry, drama, or the novel, the way to get him into the courses may be to institute courses in contemporary literature that do not put too great a strain upon him at the beginning but that bring him face to face nevertheless with honest-to-goodness pieces of literature.

Baxter Hathaway,
Montana State University.

colleagues in other departments who prefer to cut a wide swath through their subjects and leave the petty straws of presentation to their plodding brethren in English? If I do not misread between the lines of communications to this News Letter, as well as to other less esteemed periodicals, English departments freely charge themselves, or at least those teachers who are assigned to composition classes, with the full responsibility of eradicating errors from student language and of promoting intelligible expression of whatever ideas transpire.

By so doing, are we not encouraging our colleagues in other departments into foolish assumptions? If a student of abnormal psychology become incoherent in that subject, his instructor there should be able to determine whether the aberration represents a defective understanding or a faulty management of language. But in either case, for the moment, the student is offending against the topic he is trying to handle. Only by some strained and obviously unprofitable logic can he be held to be adequate in his "subject" while he remains ineffective in the management of it.

The point, briefly, is this. Relatively few students within my experience are suffering acutely from lack of instruction in English composition, and those few can readily catch up, within their personal limitations, by persistent care and some extra help. The hosts over whose sins against good English we weep are the product of an environment which ignores shortcomings (sometimes in ignorance of them), condones them if the writer "seems to know his facts," or threatens to tell the English department on him.

No one knows better than the English teacher how much extra time it takes to assign papers and to read them critically. But let us not deprive our associates in philosophy or history or biology of their proper share in the educational program of the college or school. English speech and English composition are skills—a self-discipline, which can be promoted to its due importance only through the ungrudging concern of all teachers with the minds they teach.

I am not going to contend that teachers of English are doing the best they can. I know many who err in doing too much rather than too little for their students and thus degrade language from the level of a logical implement of ideas to a catalogue of rules and examples—to be readily forgotten. We must do better work. Certainly. And while we do it, let us establish a sane perspective.

Harold C. Binkley,
Junata College.

NOTES FROM CHAPEL HILL

On November 1, after fifteen years of able and constructive administration of the Department of English, G. R. Coffman resigned the headship and took six-month leave, which he is now enjoying in scholarly and private pursuits. Since then, a committee of three, composed of Raymond Adams, P. Hudson, and Dougald MacMillan, has been administering the affairs of the department.

In the meantime, the flood of postwar registrants has swept over the University. The Department of English has 1588 students in 64 classes. Teachers in general, particularly in English, report gratifying eagerness, coupled with a desire to be shown and to work on the part of students (and not exclusively the GI's).

Members of the English Department are keenly interested in a proposed revision of the General College curriculum, now under way. In this enterprise the Department's views and interests are represented by two members, P. Hudson and Richmond P. Bond, chairman and secretary, respectively, of the faculty committee.

A. P. Hudson

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TEACHERS

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with their associates who are conventional "scholars." Such persons may be excellent critics or even capable creative writers, and they are frequently the best teachers of composition, a group notoriously underpaid and insufficiently recognized. This objection to graduate training on the part of some young men is paralleled by an objection from college and university administrators. They say that English is taught to the entire student population, including technical and professional students, and yet the college teacher of English is prepared to teach only the specialist in English or the humanities. Recently the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education has proposed to try some methods of its own to train teachers of English in engineering colleges. And there have been complaints from junior colleges and other types of institutions. We ourselves should face these criticisms honestly.

To strengthen the position of English in American college education, the following proposals are suggested for endorsement by the Association as part of its permanent policy:

(1) Many more scholarships should be made available for graduate students of English, and some of them should be awarded to able persons just beginning graduate study. The existence of such scholarships would not only increase the number of capable young men and women undertaking the teaching of English as a career, but would also enable candidates to obtain their degrees at an earlier age. It would also decrease the amount of "slave labor" in the form of graduate assistants.

(2) The beginning salary of an instructor with a doctor's degree or its equivalent should not be less than \$2750. For those found competent, a salary of \$3500 should be normal after five years' experience.

(3) Seventy-five composition students are as many as any teacher can manage efficiently.

(4) Promotions in rank and advances in salary should be given as freely to successful teachers of composition as to successful teachers of literature and to persons with proved creative talents as to those with scholarly achievements.

(5) Both in graduate school and during their novitiate, English teachers should be trained to teach English: to guide students in developing a workmanlike prose style and to give them critical assistance in "relating our subject matter to life as it is being lived and felt." Much experiment may be needed to develop effective

CURRENT OPINION

In "The Harvard Report: Its Implications and Its Applications," President Klapper, writing in the Winter A.A.U.P. Bulletin, analyzes and criticizes this much-discussed plea for a unifying purpose in higher education. Heartily approving this goal, although regretting that it is not better defined, after considering the plight of the seven percent who actually graduate from college, and have had to choose from among more than a hundred uncoordinated courses under highly specialized teachers, he too reaches the conclusion that our education "reaches too few, with too little." He recognizes the need for survey courses in the humanities, in Western thought and institutions, and in science and mathematics, to ensure the intellectually able a common base of knowledge and of attitude, and, aghast at the failure of the college teachers, wonders that the report includes no plan for their improvement.

Our own newly established Appointment Bureau provides one means of bringing the teachers of this new age into positions of wider influence. Assuredly, as Donald A. Stauffer points out in "An Ex-Marine Returns to Teaching," (American Scholar, Winter), veterans returning to college require instructors capable of demonstrating the real advantages of liberal education: the awareness of intangibles dominant in shaping human history and human life.

Men of two cultures, totally dissimilar, Lo Ch'uan-Fang ("Changing China and the Liberal Arts," Asia, Dec.) and Thomas Mann ("Germany and the Germans," Winter Yale Rev.) define these characteristically and well, looking forward to the impact of a coming age. Humanistic, not theistic, Chinese architecture has symmetry and exact proportion; its structures are always close to Mother Earth. Chinese music wanders, and it has no harmonies; in Chinese paintings man is merely a modest and inseparable part of nature. But this repose and balance, this traditional philosophic calm, must vanish as China enters into the newer, scientific, civilization with its quickened life.

But for his neurotic substratum of exclusiveness, the German would easily become a citizen of the

methods for this training, but the end should not be lost sight of in argument about means.

H. L. Creek,
Purdue University.

world, says Thomas Mann. Faust's and Luther's devils are German; they win power only at the cost of soul. German music too is demonic: calculated order and chaos-breeding irrationality. All German revolutions have failed: hence the ideal of liberty is not national, but racial and anti-European. Romanticism itself is morbid, and seduces to death. Yet the German spirit may win to freedom, in the new and larger world economy. Its struggle is here convincingly portrayed.

"Pilot Lights of the Apocalypse" (Louis N. Ridenour in Fortune, Jan.) presents a mad burlesque of Atomic-Age hysteria. In an underground control-room, a light representing San Francisco flashes red; the city has been destroyed. Wildly we retaliate; city after city falls, all over the world. Before the earthquake can be reported, or civilization has reached its end.

Of Interest to Members

"The Atom, New Source of Energy," American Scientist, Oct. 1945, 8-page supplement.

Marshall, James, "Old Adam and the Atom," Am. Scholar, Winter, 1945-46

America and the World

Baker, John Earl, "Industrializing the Good Earth," Fortune, Nov., 1945

Buck, Pearl, "Letter to Germany," Common Ground, Winter, 1946

Cohn, David L., "First in War, Last in Peace," Atlantic, Jan., 1946

Garfield, Sidney R., "The Plan That Kaiser Built," Survey Graphic, Dec., 1945

Education

Basilius, H. A., "An Open Letter Addressed to the Dean of an Arts College," Jour. Higher Ed., Nov., 1945

Himstead, Ralph E., "Education and the Peace," A.A.U.P. Bul., Autumn, 1945

Howland, W. E., "Education for Fellowship," A.A.U.P. Bul., Autumn, 1945

Price, Maurice T., "A World Perspective for the Average Student," J.H.E., Nov., Dec., 1945

A. V. Hall,
Univ. of Washington.

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AS OTHERS SEE US

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with the rah-rah spirit to married men with two children. The personnel of the review grammar class had indeed changed; the needs, the desires, the aspirations of the student were, I found, different, and they were challenging. With never a thought of in any way lowering my standards—rather I should have to elevate them—through the medium of informal written response to my questions I went about discovering this new student and trying to determine the reason why he had come to my class and what he expected to get there. From men whose experience had required sharp, direct answers, the result of the investigation left no doubts in my mind. There was no student who had returned to school simply because he was expected to do so; each one had formulated principles to follow in governing his delayed education, and from each course he anticipated definite results. One veteran summarized in this fashion:

There are certain fundamentals which a veteran expects from an English course: a broadening of vocabulary, a thorough study of sentence structure, an understanding and appreciation of written material, an opportunity for free expression of thoughts, an ability to produce in writing papers that are both readable and correct, and a training in speech that will enable the student to express himself without hesitancy.

That was rather a large program and, considering the swiftness with which veteran classes had been organized, a bit too comprehensive for practical use.

It was necessary to determine the more particular improvement the GI sought. The result was somewhat surprising, for almost without exception the greatest clamor was for vocabulary building. One of them expressed it this way:

I was a member of a team that inspected a certain infantry division. After each day's inspection a critique was held for a large number of the division officers, including a major general who never smiled. In drawing a comparison between two of the division units, I used a word that meant something entirely different from what I thought it did. The commanding officer of the unit on which I had cast the unfavorable remark was on his feet in a second and called attention to the fact that I had made a statement that was not true. I could not think of the right words to express what I really meant. I sputtered and mumbled and finally said perhaps I was wrong. The general knew I was wrong. His eyes were two bottomless pools, and I knew if I moved a fraction of an inch I would fall into them.

Another GI saw in his unfortunate experience a resemblance to what might happen in his future civilian life:

I realized that my English was poor but did not see the effect until I became a captain in the army. Constant association with the men under me, lectures, reports to meticulous higher commanders—all made me feel the need for greater knowledge of English. It is a well-known fact that enlisted men jump at the chance to censure their superior officers. I have often been embarrassed by the incorrect usage of words and the inability to express myself effectively. . . . For a long time I was associated with military law in courts-martial. In this connection it was my duty to prosecute and prepare the records of trial. I enjoyed the law work, but realized there was much for me to learn in English before I could meet with success in a career of civil law.

Two veterans had already started on a program of vocabulary building, a program which they expected to be broadened in their English classes.

As a student in high school, I found myself many times asking this question, "Why do they bore us with so much English grammar and exercises?" In my early days with the Army Air Force I found out. First, the screening test I took to become an air cadet contained a lot of vocabulary work, and I spent some sleepless nights sweating out the verdict on that examination, simply because I knew I was weak on vocabulary. . . . Later I became an instructor and ran into more trouble. I could not express myself well, and my students kept a puzzled look on their faces because I just could not find words to explain the numerous problems that arose. As an officer I was an unwilling victim of correctness and exactness.

While I was a prisoner of war in Germany I realized that my small vocabulary had become overworked to a point of exhaustion. Day after day and month after month I conversed with the same people about the same topics. My friends and I began to realize diminishing vocabularies. We became English-conscious. We studied five new words daily and made an effort to use them in our conversation. When a school was organized in the prison camp, English was one of the most popular courses.

Heretofore most of our students waited until they entered the professional or business world to experience the results of poor English preparation. Today the veteran has already learned of the inevitable penalties, and he does not wish to pay them again. With just such hope of avoidance, an ex-soldier relates:

I was inducted into the army as a clerk and put in charge of correspondence on an Aviation Cadet Board. There I realized my need for English. I would work for an hour trying to write a letter, but every time I reread it there would be more mistakes.

Knowing very little grammar and very little about punctuation, I could never be sure. . . . Three months later I was relieved, and learned some time after that it was due to my inability to write correctly. That was my lesson. Never again do I want to be caught unprepared.

Experience is indeed a great teacher, but observation and perception can be just as great, and often without the attendant ignominy. One keen observer did not wish to fall into the error of a comrade whose disgrace he had witnessed:

While I was overseas, a high-ranking officer was called upon to read before my entire unit a proclamation issued by the President. Although he was an intelligent man, his inability to read this effectively gained the ridicule of his men, and he lost the respect due a superior officer. . . . In my English course, it is not my desire to master completely every minute detail. Instead, I wish to find a sense of security in knowing I can use effective words properly and dispense with any fear of jeopardizing my success as a result of poor grammar.

Though the practical side of English training was paramount in the minds of most of the veterans who were returning to classes, the cultural attainments were not always forgotten.

I want English to give me three things: first, an ability to write correctly, especially letters; second, an ability to speak my thoughts in front of people; third, practice in reading—but not from the classics, for well and good as they may be, the reading I will do will come from contemporary writings.

And in at least one student this emphasis on present-day matters gave way to the more spacious domain of delightful living which the English classroom is so peculiarly able to make real:

During my years at sea I found that fellow-officers with an English literature background generally made inspiring companions. Their outlook on life was much broader than mine. They seemed fitter for life and its esthetic beauties than the professionally schooled man. I began to feel an attachment to men with literary inclinations. At this time I decided not to continue my study of engineering but to enter a college for a study of the humanities. I know this study will open up new pleasures and appreciations, and above all give me a greater perspective of life.

These expressions are typical ones. They indicate an earnestness which is sincere and practical. With such students English instruction will need to observe a subtle discrimination. "The hungry sheep look up," and it will not be possible to "shove away the worthy bidden guest." Whether the change is easily perceptible or

not, the teaching of English will undergo a metamorphosis now that the war is over. This change may be hardly noticeable to the teacher, and it may occur almost without his realizing it. But occur it will, for methods and materials must always be evolved from the necessities of those who are being taught.

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University of North Carolina.

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